

WE DID NOT PREPARE FOR PEACE

AND AND FRANCE MADE READY.

Alert to Problems. Will Troops Come? Pressing Query.

(By David Lawrence.)

Washington, Nov. 18.—(Copyright, Evening Post.)—Reconstruction of the world after the war is a delicate period in a nation's history.

England and France fore-see the American government as totally unprepared.

In the days when peace was made, the political parties in the United States, except the occasional bill introduced in Congress, and sporadic discussion, were almost entirely unprepared.

The fault is partially that of the executive branch of the government, for there is absolutely no plan for the future.

Both houses would have been willing to consider any reconstruction bill introduced in the late days of the war, but the executive branch of the government had no plan for the future.

And if reconstruction had been developed, the public opinion, which has been so active during the late days of the war, would have insisted upon some measures that might have been adequate for the future.

Something of a panic has been set on foot by the government organization, and the public opinion, which has been so active during the late days of the war, would have insisted upon some measures that might have been adequate for the future.

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MEMPHIS, TENN., AVIATOR ESCAPES FROM HUN CAMP—SWIMS THE RHINE

Lieut. George Puryear Hero of Miraculous Flight From German Prison.

(By Robert S. Doman, I. N. S. Staff Correspondent.)

Somewhere in France (by mail)—Seventy Americans in the German prison camp at Villigen, Germany, made a desperate and concerted attempt to escape on the night of Sunday, Oct. 6. So far three men have crossed the border. The first was Lieutenant Aviator George Wright Puryear, of Memphis, Tenn.

Puryear swam across the Rhine to Switzerland early in the morning of Oct. 11. Two days later Harold Willis, of Boston, a former Lafayette Escadrille flier who was captured at Verdun in August, 1917, and Naval Lieutenant Edouard Isaac, of Portsmouth, Va., escaped into Switzerland.

Only a few days previously, Oct. 9, the first American soldier to escape from a German prison camp had arrived at Bern, Switzerland.

He was Frank Sovick, of Shuandaoh, Pa., a Polish-American who enlisted a few days after America declared war. Puryear was the first American officer to escape from Germany.

On June 26, while patrolling near Ville Neuve sur Fere, about four kilometers southwest of Fere in Tardenois, Puryear engaged an enemy machine in combat. The fight carried him unawares into the German lines. Puryear shot down his adversary, mortally wounding the machine gunner. Two guards were badly wounded and believing himself in allied territory, Puryear descended, intending to remove one or both of the aviators as prisoners to an American hospital. Such descents in allied territory to aid a badly wounded adversary have been a part of the knightly code of the air.

No Time to Burn Plans. Upon landing and before he could burn his machine Puryear was captured by German troops, who were in hiding. The German pilot of the machine whom he had descended to help was shot at once for "shooting at a wounded man"—the observer of the German plane.

After his capture Puryear was taken to a hospital which was also an intelligence examining post. He was kept there for three hours. His flying suit was taken away from him as well as his Sam Browne belt and goggles. Puryear's name and squadron were learned from his Sam Browne belt, on which the information was written. From the hospital Puryear was taken to a castle, where he was again examined by an intelligence officer.

Next day he was marched, again alone, ten kilometers behind the lines to another intelligence post, where he was once more examined. On the following day, with fifteen captured Americans of the Twenty-sixth division and about 200 French soldiers, he was taken to Laon.

At each stop intelligence officers examined him. He was asked how many Americans there were in the camp.

At 10:30 Sunday night the guards turned out the lights in the prison camp. This was the signal for all the men to make their escape preparations. At 10:45 the lights outside the prison camp were short-circuited by one of the Americans. From three sides of the barracks the American aviators and prisoners made their dash for liberty.

Immediately the German guards blew their whistles and opened their guns. Surrounding the barracks was a low barbed-wire fence, and beyond that a deep ditch with barbed-wire entanglements in it. It was a ten-foot fence with hooks facing inward along the top. Outside this fence were the guards' living quarters. Puryear, Isaac, Willis and their companions had to run this gauntlet, after getting through the barred windows of the barracks.

The penalty of being caught in the wire was death. Only a few days before in the general hospital a Russian had been caught in the wire and instantly killed. Puryear climbed over all obstacles and up against the fence, as he leaped over the fence firing began. His companion had his foot on the lower round of the ladder as Puryear went over.

Once outside the barracks Puryear found himself between two guards. Both shouted at him to stop. Puryear, according to orders, they shouted three times for him to stop. Puryear took refuge behind a tree. Both guards came toward him. Puryear picked up the nearest one and brushed by him so that the other would not dare to fire for fear of killing his friend.

The guard nearest Puryear was flustered and Puryear was fifty feet away before he fired. (The second guard fired almost at the same time. Both bullets whizzed by his head.)

All shots missed aim. Six shots were fired in all point-blank at Puryear. The guards, however, were old men, and their aim was bad. At the time they fired one guard was twenty feet from the other fifty feet away. Just as the second shot was fired at him Puryear stumbled and fell trying to climb the fence. He was wounded or killed by these shots if he had not fallen.

Endless the guards thought they had winged him, for they turned their attention elsewhere for the moment. Puryear crawled off the top of a nearby building and ran and ran against the sky and the guards again saw him. More bullets whizzed by his head. He kept low and ran and ran until at length he fell exhausted, panting and trembling.

The young American aviator was equipped with a home-made compass for which he had given a Russian a box of crackers, a sack of coffee, a can of meat and an army shirt. He wore a Russian overcoat and cap, as the silhouette of a Russian uniform is similar to that of the German uniform at night. In the daytime Russians are not much molested along the country roads.

His Red Cross Box. Puryear carried his Red Cross supplies from the food boxes sent him from Bern. He was able to build himself up physically so that he was able to live on the raw potatoes, carrots and turnips which he dug out of the fields while making his way to the forest.

The next day Puryear spent in the forest poring over his map until he had memorized every detail of it. Just before day broke he set two men going to work. He avoided them, but

France. Puryear replied that there were 1,500,000.

The newspapers are great liars," replied the German officer.

All the intelligence officers particularly questioned him as to why America was in the war. Puryear gave a dozen reasons why America was in the war.

"Yes, yes, I know," replied the officers impatiently, "but what does America expect to get out of the war? What territory, what advantage does she expect to gain after the war is over?"

Why U. S. Entered War. It was plain to Puryear that the German officers were puzzled to know what ulterior motives America had in entering the war. They were cynical as to America's championship of the allied cause on idealistic grounds alone. But it was evident that they were befuddling their brains trying to find out what America expected to get.

"We are not fighting for gain," replied Puryear. "We are fighting for democracy and small nations shall not be overrun by monarchies and their military machines."

Puryear also was asked when he thought the war would end. A map showing the supposed positions of American aerodromes was placed before him. He was asked if his aerodrome was not at such and such a spot. He agreed that it was. As a matter of fact, however, the aerodromes had been moved two weeks previously to another place to prevent escapes. The jail delivery was planned for Sunday night, and the Americans agreed to break out on several places, so as to keep the guards busy.

Guards Blew Whistles. At 10:30 Sunday night the guards turned out the lights in the prison camp. This was the signal for all the men to make their escape preparations. At 10:45 the lights outside the prison camp were short-circuited by one of the Americans. From three sides of the barracks the American aviators and prisoners made their dash for liberty.

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